INCOMING TELEGRAM (55)

# United States Information Agency

714.00/2-354

714.02-14

27

SECRET

Action: ARA

INFO SS G SP O R OLI CIA P CCB I PS IBS

This copy has been designated the RECORD COPY. It must be returned to DC/R for filing.

CONTROL: 1350
REC'D: February 3, 1954 4:48 p.m.

614

FROM: Guatemala City

TO: United States Information Agency

NO: TOUSI 29, February 3, noon

Re EMBTEL 288 February 2.

Expulsion Sydney Gruson and Marshal Bannell.

At evening session Congress February 1 (EMBTEL 290 February 2) Communist deputy Victor Manuel Gutierrez harshly attacked local independent press with charges of supporting foreign intervention defending conspirators and traitors reprinting attacks on Guatemala originating in foreign press confusing liberty with license. He charged independent press involved in plot against Guatemala revolution as paid outlet for subversive propaganda, receiving funds from foreign enterprises.

USIS and Embassy recommend maximum unattributed press radio output stressing expulsion of Gruson, Bannell, constitutes undisguised blow at freedom of press. Imply that Gutierrez statement before Congress indicates intensification of Communist drive against local independent press. Underscore that Gutierez attack on independent press was apparently timed to coincide with expulsion of foreign newsmen and strongly suggests strength of Communist influence over government.

KRAUSS

RSP:MS/11

2/9/54

X X

This copy has been designated the RECORD COPY. It must be returned to DC/R for filing.

FILED
AUG 31 1954
SECRET FILE

714.00/2-354

SECRET

STATE - DC

REPRODUCTION FROM THIS COPY, IF CLASSIFIED, IS PROHIBITED

AIR POUCH
PRIORITY

CONFIDENTIAL
(Security Classification)

DO NOT TYPE IN THIS SPACE
714.00/2-354
AR 714.001

# FOREIGN SERVICE DESPATCH

FROM : AMEMBASSY, GUATEMALA

662
DESP. NO.

TO : THE DEPARTMENT OF STATE, WASHINGTON.

February 3, 1954
DATE

REF : Embassy Despatch 653, February 1.

REC'D FEB 3 1954

| For Dept. Use Only | ACTION | DEPT. | DC/R-2 OLI-6 EUR/A-1 MC-2 |
|---|---|---|---|
| | ARA-4 | INFO | OCB-1 C/A-7 OSD-2 ARMY-3 NAVY-3 |
| | REC'D 2/5 | OTHER | AIR-3 USIA-10 |

SUBJECT: Did the Communist Party Have Fore-knowledge of the Alleged Plot to Overthrow the Guatemalan Government?

An interesting and perhaps significant sidelight of the Guatemalan Government's alleged discovery of a plot by Colonel Carlos CASTILLO Armas and General Miguel YDIGORAS Fuentes is the evidence that the Communist Partido Guatemalteco del Trabajo (PGT) may have known of the plot sometime before the official government announcement although the discovery was officially credited to the Guardia Judicial, Guatemala's security police.

The evidence on this point is circumstantial rather than conclusive. Perhaps the most telling indication is that the Central Committee of the PGT issued an apparently well-worked-out manifesto on the same day as the government statement was released, January 29. It may very well have been prepared in advance since the government did not make the release until about noon and it would have taken rapid work indeed for an unprepared group in the remainder of the day to analyze the seven, single-spaced, legal-size pages of the government statement and voluminous photostats, to find and convoke a score of Central Committee members, draw up and approve a manifesto, and put it in the hands of the printers.

Moreover, the PGT newspaper Tribuna Popular appeared certain from the first that a plot against the government was involved, while the remainder of the press was confused between the conflicting official statements on the subject. Thus in reporting Miguel CAMACHO's flight to the Salvadoran Embassy in the January 26 issue, Tribuna Popular asserted that it had been established that he was compromised in a "vast conspiratorial network to overthrow the legitimately constituted government," a charge which up to that time had been made by no official spokesman. In the January 27 issue, at a time when the other press make-up men tended to feature Minister of the Interior Augusto CHARNAUD MacDonald's statement that no plot was involved over the Guardia Judicial's announcement that one was, Tribuna Popular boldly headlined its story "Conspiracy Against the Government Discovered." While this treatment of the news fitted in the PGT's time-worn propaganda line, it appears fair to speculate whether the party newspaper would have so flatly asserted that a plot existed unless its editors had reason to believe that the government had proof.

CONFIDENTIAL

REPORTER
JCHill:cs

ACTION COPY — DEPARTMENT OF STATE

The action office must return this permanent record copy to DC/R files with an endorsement of action taken.

714.00/2-354

CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL
(Classification)



Moreover, the form of the government statement appears to bear the imprint of Communist--or Communist-influenced--drafting. The reporting officer, who had occasion to see a number of Communist statements on "espionage" and "subversive plots" while serving in Eastern Europe, was struck by the outline consisting of a preamble about alleged anti-state activity followed by an outline of the alleged plot itself contrived in such a way that odd pieces of "documentary" evidence were cemented together with unsupported propaganda allegations. The technique, for instance, of twisting a letter cataloguing an offer of arms by H. F. Cordes and Co. into a statement that the plotters actually intended to use napalm bombs seemed particularly interesting. In connection with this speculation that a Communist or Communist-influenced mind was responsible for the drafting of the government statement, it is interesting to note that Víctor Manuel GUTIERREZ, the Communist Deputy, said in his speech in Congress on February 1, that the Arévalo Administration had made a mistake in failing to give the public documentation of the plots against it, but the Arbenz Administration had rendered the Revolution a service in doing so.

William L. Krieg
Chargé d'Affaires a.i.

CONFIDENTIAL